

name has come into general but not exclusive use for this bird. Some works, such as the important *Handbook of British Birds*, continue to use the nomenclaturally correct name *Oenanthe leucomela* (Pallas).

This Pied Wheatear is one of about 18 species of the genus *Oenanthe*. It is not a species whose name appears often in non-ornithological literature. In the most influential ornithological work to appear in the U.S.S.R. in our times, the *Birds of the Soviet Union* (1951-1954), of which two of the applicants in this proposal, Dementiev and Gladkov, were editors and contributors, it is not given species status, but is treated as a subspecies of *Oenanthe hispanica* Linnaeus.

One assumes that the plenary powers should be invoked only when there is definitely something to be gained by doing so. In the present case, if any names were to be "suppressed", it should probably be those of Lepechin. But since they are invalid anyway, no exercise of plenary power would seem necessary, merely an admonition from the Commission that all authors use the correct names, those of Pallas.

COMMENTS ON THE PROPOSED DESIGNATION OF A NEOTYPE FOR *OOPSITTA MARSHALLI* IREDALE, 1946. Z.N.(S.) 1773

By H. J. deS. Disney (*The Australian Museum, Sydney, N.S.W.*)

It is considered that under Article 75 the author is wrong in proposing to set aside the holotype for a neotype. The type specimens or the original three specimens, although a bit worn, are still valid as types.

It is suggested that the correct procedure would be for the author to re-describe the bird fully from his topotypes and state very clearly where they are deposited and, if possible, a specimen or specimens should be where the types are held. If this proposal of the author is accepted it means that all slightly damaged types of birds or insects or any animal can be discarded for more perfect specimens.

By I. C. J. Galbraith (*British Museum (Natural History), London, England*)

This proposal is quite unnecessary, and if adopted would set an unfortunate precedent. Many, perhaps most, subspecies cannot be differentiated by reference to their holotypes alone. The type specimens are important mainly for establishing specific identity, and the type locality and the characters of the local population are more important for the discrimination of subspecies. Only if the type specimens disagreed with the characters of the population at the type locality would the "exceptional circumstances" necessary to the designation of a neotype exist. There is no suggestion that this is true of *Opopsitta diophthalma marshalli*. In any case, Article 75 makes no provision for the designation of a neotype, where the holotype still exists but is imperfect.

WITHDRAWAL OF THE PROPOSAL TO DESIGNATE A NEOTYPE UNDER THE PLENARY POWERS FOR *OOPSITTA MARSHALLI* IREDALE, 1946. Z.N.(S.) 1773

(see volume 23, pages 283-284)

By Joseph M. Forshaw (*Division of Wildlife Research, C.S.I.R.O., Canberra, A.C.T., Australia*)

I refer to the above application in which I asked the Commission to use its plenary powers to set aside the holotype of *Opopsitta marshalli* Iredale, 1946, and recognize a neotype designated by me. The differences between *marshalli* and *Opopsitta diophthalma aruensis*, with which it had been synonymized by previous authors, were not apparent from examination of the holotype of *marshalli* as all distinguishing characters had been destroyed by pests.